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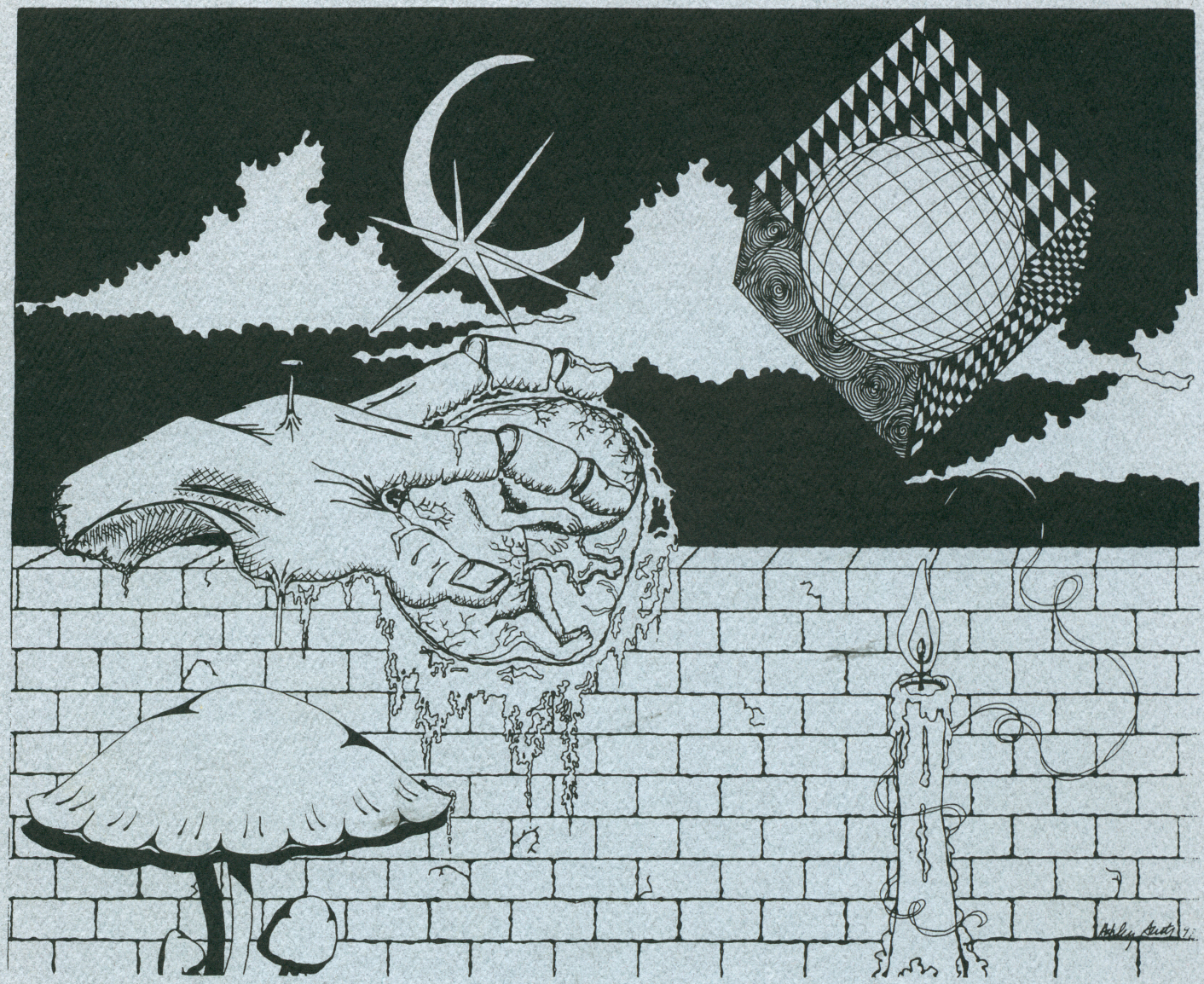

--Acalite Literary Magazine 1993--

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Acalite
Literary Magazine

1992-1993

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CRADLESONG

Shh. My window is open. The night outside becomes the night inside, and the haunting wind flies over the slope of distant city lights below me. It keens past my window and tries to clutch the frame and climb in, but is hurled on with its velocity. I am not afraid of it now. Later it will slow down, and when I hear it stop I will know it is inside, behind me, watcing. Shh. Tonight, a lullaby for the wind-whipped darkness. Tonight, a cradlesong for the dying storm.

This is the lullaby of the innercity. It is twisted cordons and guarded lines and empty, deserted places where the carnivorous shadows breed. I saved you from this. Storms here leave lightening lying on the ground for the children to play with. It is gravel and asphalt and darkness. Children dream of waking to see eyes at the bottom of their bed and a voice rasping for something they've got. I saved you from this too.

The night before you were born I saw one of the children of these streets, bat-blind from too much seeing, high on something, lying under a street light staring up, as if waiting, hoping, for a little of that light to slip down his eyes through his soul. And I felt the thing growing in me to be a sickness. I did not want you, one more thing to break myself apart over, and you would have known. I let you die. It was the only tenderness I had.

This is the lullaby of the innercity. It is where children are afraid to sleep with their mouts open, for fear of something crawling in worse than the bugs, and waking to find a twisting and contorting on the edge of their vision and fearful, clawing new instincts. I saved you from this. I let you die. I gave you to the mercy of a sweeping cold night.

I have no apologies left.

Slowly the wind outside my window has died. And slowly, slowly, I close and latch it.

It is inside, behind me. Behind me, watching.

Melissa Manlove

You like the night.
I love it for what it could be
but hate it for what it is.
You fear the day
you hide from the light.
I dread the darkness
I turn to the light,
grasping out, desperately reaching...
You escape into the darkness
where you can be you
without the senseless worrying.
Then the veil is tightened
at the first glimmer of dawn.
But mornings are such hope!
Don't you see?
And the night is so empty.
I trip and fall and no one is there to catch me.
I hate being lonely!
I know you do too, no matter what you say.
So give me your hand and join me here
in this dream of eternal twilight.
We shall be alone
together.

Sonja Downing

I CARRY A BOUQUET FOR YOU
RED CHRYSANTHEMUM,
BELLADONNA, CLEMANTIS,
AND DAISY WHITE, ALL
SURROUNDING A CYPRESS.
THE BELLADONNA TO EXPRESS
WHAT I CANNOT SAY IN WORDS.
THE CHRYSANTHEMUM TO EXPRESS
THAT WHICH I CANNOT IN BODY.
THE CLEMANTIS TO REMIND ME
OF WHAT I LOVED SO DEARLY.
DAISY WHITE TO PAINT A
PICTURE OF YOU IN YOUR
INNOCENCE.
AND THIS CYPRESS,
THIS WRETCHED CYPRESS,
WHICH NEEDS NO EXPLAINING.

DAN SCOTT

Solo-ban
Oh rectangle frame
13 long and 2 and a halves deep,
Oh what do you have for me?

Perhaps a golden ring?

Or maybe a play thing?

Along your luminous sides I see:
Polished wood,
Intricate designs of nature.
So why oh why,
Don't you have anything for me?

One breath held and then,
I wait in impatience,
As I search,
Between curious riges,
And between curious ridges,
And between grooves I hear:
Playful clicks,
Rolling shifts,
Secrets to my answers?
Oh where is you present to me?

My pace becomes furious,
I search with obsession,
'Till finally me and the soloban sing,
We are two voices,
My fingers and she.

One continuous chant,
Over an inundation of numbers:
As it rises in intensity,
The message is clear,
I finally know what present she has for me!

Every letter is crisp,
Clean,
And so understandable.
I don't know why I never heard them before!

Her gift is grandious,
For the little frame,
She so casts herself in.
For every person:
She conceals a present,
For everyday of the year,
A most wonderful chant.
It mesmerizes and tells all.

But soon I forgot about the song,
And soon put it down:
All willingness gone.

So you see now,
Why I look so forgone,
Everytime I pick her up,
From her resting place,
Limp and neglected;
I left her for another song,
Another chant.

Everytime I click the beads,
A magic sweeps over me:
I still hear the hypnotic trance,
And I hear out sad duet,
Me and she,
Old fingers and ,
Rectangle frame,
13 long and 2 and a halves deep

(egg whites)

Oh, hi, James, how are you? It's been so long since we last talked.
Yeah, it's been a whole 24 hours. You stupid moron, why the hell are you calling me! Can't you take a hint? I guess avoiding your phone calls, hanging up on you, and refusing t go out with you wasn't good enough.
Oh really? That's so funny. So, uhh, hilarious. Are you serious--23 doses of Wavy Gravy? That's really cool.
Stupid drug addict. The only thing you have to say to me concerns LSD. Do you think I'll like you now? How am I going to get rid of you this time. 'Oh James--by the way, my house is burning down. Gotta go.'
No, I'm not going to the Grateful Dead. I don't have a ticket--I wish I did, though. You have an extra one? Really? Sure, I might be able to go with you, maybe. I'll have to ask my mom first. That would be fun.
Yeah, going to the Dead with you would be fun. So would licking razor blades. So would being covered in ticks. Oh that would be great. I'd rather die than go anywhere with you. Why are you so obsessed?
I hear you're listenign to Black Sabbath, as always. Oh, you're playing along? That must take talent. You really think you're better than Hendrix? Wow.
If you're better than Hendrix, I'm more beautiful than Christie Brinkley. I've heard you play the guitar and you suck. If I were Jimi Hendrix, I'd be rolling over in my grave. I hate you. I hate you. I hate you so much. Why won't you go away and leave me alone! I loathe you. Do you want it in writing? You are a loser, a loathesome, moronic, slimy, pathetic mound of excrement.
Oh, I'm busy afterschool tomarrow. I think I have to wash the dog. I don't have a dog? Oh, yeah--I have to go wash the neighbor's dog. Maybe I'll be free next week, but I'm not sure.
Yeah, right I'll be free. For you, I'm busy the rest of my life. I have to think of something to get rid of you. I must get excuse, otherwise I will go crazy. I wonder if long exposure to James Henderson causes brain damage. I wonder if conversation with James Henderson causes insanity. I wonder if I will ever be rid of you. You are like a rash that just won't go away. You are the zit that just gets bigger. You are the plague. I really have to hang up now. I'm going nuts, thanks to you, you oblivious imbecile.
Umm... James, my mom really needs to use the phone. I'll try and call you back, but I think I'm going out. Yeah, talke to you later.
Stupid moron! If you call again tonight, or ever, I'll kill you. At least he's gone for now. Why, why am I cursed?

Sarah MacLellan

The Night Fog

The frosty fog hovered over my eyes,
As I walked through the fresh night air,
With the gloomy mist as my disguise,
And the gentle chilly breeze blowing my hair.

A slight drizzle fell softly upon my face,
And the sound of streams trickled to my ears,
I did not know the meaning of disgrace,
As the drizzle mixed with my tears.

The fog slowly lifted above my head,
As the rain stopped, and the grass dried,
I thought to myself my love for her was dead,
And I stood helpless while I cried.

The luminous moon could no longer be seen,
As the sun's shimmering rays filled the sky.
Had it really happened or was she just a dream?
I thought of her and told myself not to cry.

The sun rose up and glowed radiantly bright,
As birds started chirping and clouds rolled on,
And I could still remember that fateful night,
When, just like the fog, she had gone.

David Hyun

Loss of something personal

This loss was shared wiht him, and funny enough,
I don't feel any different than i did yesterday
before the back seat was put down,
before i first thought about it at all,
at least with him.
I don't feel as if we've "united souls,"
or anything like that, so I guess I'm a sinner,
or something.
It felt good to lose,
can't say that about too many things.
It seems strange to write this, or think it.
I wouldn't, don't want to turn back at all,
I'm not lying.
What I'm saying is true, and I wonder if others have felt the same.
But, when I do think of him, what he took, what i gave,
what I would give him again,
I feel warm, snuggled inside of me-happy
and somehow older.
This was not something i didn't want,
and I love him. Truly.
It's not one of those fairy tale, perfect feelings,
it's mortal but special and prized.
I've reached a new stage in my growing up, breaking away:
i made a choice, and I am happy with my decision.
Happy isn't the right word-
good, secure.
I mean, don't get me wrong-I still doubt,
I don't feel more secure than i did before my loss,
more secure in my relationship with him.
Maybe this sounds cheezy,
We've shared something too personal to even try and explain,
and we'll always be different, i to I and him to Him.
I am more open than i was before i lost what I lost,
womanly, sexual, decisive, worried, in less control,
in more control, more Myself, and less myself. Ambiguous but good.
This loss was shared with him, and funny enough,
I feel diffrent than i did yesterday.

annonymous

Fortress of Pain

I built a fortress 'round my heart and mind,
To protect me from all who were unkind.
Impervious, within which I could hide,
No passages to let the pain inside.
Hidden, deep within me, from outside eyes,
It is masking existing pain with lies.

Then one day an outsider comes to knock,
But he finds no door which he can unlock.
With tender touch and word he wins my heart,
And my sturdy walls start to fall apart.
With trust he works his way into my mind,
But all the pain I've felt has made me blind.

So now I stand with open trusting arms,
Oblivious to any sort of harms.
To me this stranger really seems to care,
And so I leave my heart and feelings bare.
So he comes in and steals my heart away,
And I live on tenderness day by day.

Suddenly the situation is weird,
And I end up with the broken heart I feared.
Inside I feel as if I could just die,
But I will never let him see me cry.
Now he says he just wants to be my friend,
And I realize now all good things must end.

My heart breaks and I feet it start to burn,
The pain builds up and makes my stomach churn.
Walls rebuild, I watch construction begin,
Thicker, stronger, to hide the pain I'm in.
Darkness closes in as the pain blinds me,
But maybe in the future I will again see.

Kirsten Coakeley

PROPHETIC DIARY

INTO THE DESOLATE VALLEY,
DUSTED BY THE SANDS OF MANY MOONS,
A SNAKE-LIKE CARAVAN MOVES,
I FOLLOW SLOWLY, MY MOTHER
SHE BECKONS ME TO HURRY,
TIRED I WALK, BUT WALK I DO,
THE LAST YEARS ON THIS TRAIL,
IN THE DESERT WERE TOUGH,
MANY OF US DIED,
THE STRONG AS WELL AS WEAK,
FEW ARE STILL CAPABLE TO LEAD,
YET WE STRUGGLE ON,
YEARS PASS AND OUR WANDERING
CONTINUES, I AM OLDER AND
WISER, STILL I AM YOUNG BUT
GETTING STRONGER DAY BY DAY,
I HAVE LEARNED TO FIGHT,
YESTERDAY EVENING I WENT
SCOUTING, I WENT WITH TWO
ELDERS, THEY TOLD ME THEY HEARD
FROM GOD I'D BE KING
I'VE LED THE MANY FOR WEEKS,
I FEEL WE ARE CLOSER TO
OUR DESTINATION, THE HEAT IS
STARTING TO TIRE OUR ELDERS,
WE MAKE REST, THE FOOT
OF A MOUNTAIN SHALL BE OUR
CAMP, I ALONE EMBARK UP,
TO SET COURSE, THERE I VIEW
CANAAN, THIS IS ALL I
REMEMBER OF MY LIFE
IN HELL.

DOMINIC MORENO

I wonder about you.
Sometimes.
Would you cry
If I died?
Would you care
If you knew
I respect you?
If we met
Twenty years from now
In a store
Or on the street or at a baseball game,
Would you remember me?
If I suddenly
Vanished,
Or moved away,
Would you notice I was gone?
If I died
Would you cry?

Emily Arnold

ERIC

Lynessa Oliver

He didn't bother me or even scare me at first. When I first started to hang out with him, I worried less about my well-being than I ever have. Maybe it was because he was so interested in me, like no one else had been, or it could have been that fact that he could beat up anyone who got in my way.

I remember meeting him when I was confused and unhappy and I knew it showed. I was smoking too much and trying to be happy and probably trying too much to fit in. Truth was, I didn't even like cigarettes and I wasn't happy and I didn't fit in. I've never fit in anyway. Maybe Eric sensed that and that's what sparked our first conversation. I would like to think he just liked me because of me, like he said, but I knew it was Rita's Italian looks that attracted him.

The first thing he said to me was whispered in my ear, from behind. He smelled of cigarettes and my shampoo. All of the sudden I felt a tap on my shoulder and asked, "Do you sleep with the lights on or off?"

"Off." I smiled, hoping he would notice I was doing my best in the flirting category.

"And do I turn you on or off?"

"Off." and I tried even harder to flirt. He was good looking in a scary sort of way, giving people of the opposite sex that sort of look that he wanted something else than just to chat over European coffee. It didn't bother me at that time. In fact, I was rather flattered someone was interested in me.

We did chat over coffee for awhile and I became fully aware that his eyes were not on me most of the time. They focused on Rita, who was doing her best to French inhale and trying to pick up on some older man. Eric was doing his best to cover up that he was staring at Rita, but I knew. Just like always, I was being used. I decided to play along with it, though, because I liked the attention.

Eric finally began to scare me. I wondered about the cut on his hand but didn't ask. He saw me looking at it and shrugged it off. "From a fight." he said quietly. "But this one here," he said, starting to roll up his sleeve to reveal a nine inch knife scar, "is from when I was jumped in a parking lot by my home."

"Oh" I gasped, not knowing what else to say. A few minutes of silence passed until I finally gained the courage to ask a few questions about his life and they were answered with an alarming openness.

Rita joined us after her "older man" had to go home to meet his curfew. Eric was purely delighted to meet her and I wondered what he wanted from her. Or me, for that matter. We decided we should head home and Eric asked for a ride. Before I could say yes; he yelled, "shotgun" and the three of us piled into my mom's car.

On the trip to Eric's apartment, he was sure to gather our phone numbers. I had to turn the car around twice because Eric would forget to tell me where to turn since he was so busy talking to Rita. I pulled into a driveway, leading to a group of rundown apartments. Eric turned towards me and kissed me on the cheek and Rita got out of the backseat, being sure to bump into Eric so he would have to kiss her too.

The next evening I received a phone call. Eric had decided to call me instead of Rita. First, I was delighted, then scared, and then I concluded I was paranoid. What was a boy with nine inch knife scars calling me for? What was a boy who was kicked out of his house at age sixteen calling me for?

I told Rita about my conversation with Eric. She just giggled until I told her about the scars. I had never really seen Rita in any mood other than happy or flirty or pissed off and it scared me she was equally worried about getting involved with someone like him.

It wasn't just the knife scars, either. It was the whole way he looked at me and talked to me and stared at Rita. The whole Eric frightened me, but I had no idea how to stop him from calling me or Rita. The phone calls persisted at all hours of the night and my parents wondered why a certain Eric called at two-thirty on a Wednesday night.

As I look back now, I know what kept me from hanging up on him or telling Rita to hang up on him. For the first time in my life, here was somebody who made me feel like I belonged. The hour long conversations we had made me think I was somebody, even if it was to someone who carried papers, that said he was schizophrenic or who had lit a ten mile long strip of freeway on fire when he was fourteen.

By this time, I had decided I liked hanging out with Eric. He scared me, but there was no one else in my little world who said I was pretty or I should rebel against my parents because they were stupid or who introduced me to real life, unlike the sheltered life I grew up in. There

was no one who told me I was worth something or I could do what I wanted and screw what everyone thought. For the first time, someone told me I was unique without having to put black lipstick on. I didn't grow up in an environment where uniqueness was favored, and finally, I felt like I found the puzzle I fit into, sort of.

But this was only sometimes. The sometimes when I wanted to feel I belonged somewhere so I made myself read into Eric's words too much. I never read into Rita's words like this, or my parents, but since I wanted to belong so badly, I made myself believe I belonged.

After weeks of sneaking out and meeting Eric, Rita snubbed him, telling him she wasn't interested in commitment, especially not a two-day commitment. I guess he got desperate and went for me. One night, we sat, like usual, my feet in his lap, until he picked them up, leaned over and whispered in my ear, "When do you want to sleep with me, Karen?". All I could do was stare at him. "You want to, I know, so why not? Why not tonight?"

I got up, turned around, and gave him a nasty look. I walked over to Rita, and whispered, "If you want a ride, you're coming with me." Behind me I could hear Eric yell, "Do you think I talked to you just for your mind?". I didn't answer. I only walked to my car with Rita and drove off.

Three months later I stumbled into him. I was with my mom, trying to do some after-Christmas shopping. I had skipped the black lipstick and realized that I just didn't fit in, anywhere, especially if I tried. I tried to walk right past him, staring at the ground. He hadn't stopped glaring at me. He grabbed my arm and I looked up. "Let go of me." I whispered, not looking at him.

"I leave for jail on Monday. Just thought I'd tell you that you can stop being scared and try to be happy, if that's possible. You know I never meant to hurt you, ever." I looked into his eyes and for once I saw they were as scared as my own had been. I shook off his grip I ran to catch up with my mom.

"Who was that?" my mom asked with concern that her daughter would get mixed up with the "wrong crowd".

"No one you would care about" and then I thought about it for a minute and added, "or I would either." I could lie just like he could.

This year everything went mixed-up
It rained in May, and everything
turned green for thee days.
This year, people started
wearing bell-bottoms in
fashion show with big hats that
cost 3 to make, but 70 to buy.
everything changed after summer
and everyone seemed too different
to understand.
This year, i'm writing with
Nigel's lucky-black pen that
everyone loves to steal.
The guy with the red hair
told me to
"Never be mediocre"
but somehow, I became
more mediocre than ever.
Some pushed my dreams
to the stars,
while others told me they
were worthless.
And I believed them.
there was a reason,
at least, I thought there was...
but I can't remember them anymore

Katie Howard

The room is dark, dark as my echoing heart.
Your voice comes over the line
Right there in my ear.
But no sweet breath touches my skin.
It is not you lean body beside mine on the sheets
Only another pillow
No gentle lips taste mine.
I remember the love that was there.
My heart aches with pain
A wave threatening to engulf me
We laugh
There is salt on my lips and my cheeks are wet.
I want you here, I need you here.
Our hands clasped tight together
Then it would be dark no longer
With you I could see the path,
Long and shining bright
But for now it is dark
And it is the rain that is falling.

Christine Nickel

Twilight of Darkness

The city was dark and filled with pain. The lost souls wandered the debris strewn street, searching forever for life in lifelessness.
Rain, dark rain, flows through the empty gutters carrying the lost objects and dreams of the soulless away.
Lightening cracks across the forboading sky each flash illuminating the collums, endless collums of people.
For in a moment, night turned to day and day to night, a moment where dreams were made and lost. A split second when life became lifeless and my heart became cold.
For in the darkness I search, for the one I lost.
I dwell in the corners, for I am lost in a strange land where fear rules. I walk on, journeying through darkness and pain to find what it found, but what is lost in a lost time.
I shall journey on 'till it's found
for I am lost when it is found
I am darkness in light
I am joy in despair
I am alone, I miss you.

Olav Phillips

In my hand a bomb;
Not an ordinary bomb.

All I do all day is stare at the cool, nonchalent features of this heartless murder machine. the mechanical touch on its etched surface, so smooth to the one millionth of a billionth that electronical shocks reverberate through my spine. My metatarsals suddenly are hollowed of

(warmth-giving, life-giving)
blood rich marrow. All I am is
EMPTY.

Emptier than a can of beer after a cold winter's bashing. All the gaiety, hurt, feelings of remorse, embarassment, cold-bitter frost are gone. Only a howling wind squares a small portion of its song in the enterance of the indented can. If you go into this...

place...

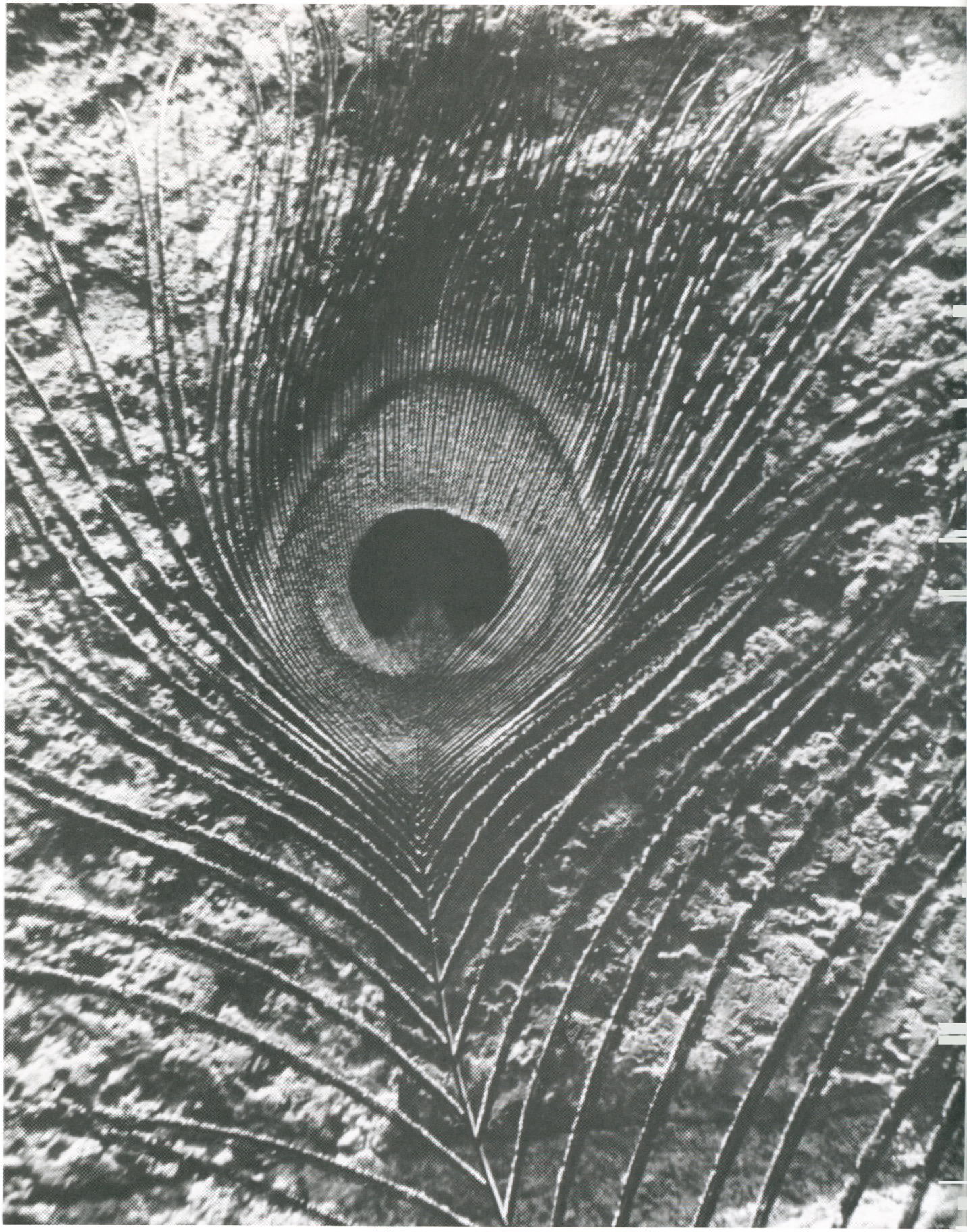
you see the jagged overhang of the indentation, ominous and yet benign... Not life but not death. It is there. Tiny pinpoints of shredded aluminum jut out at you: microscopic.

microscopic...
My problems are...
microscopic
I am...
microscopic...
I don't deserve to be more than...
microscopic...
I starve to be...
microscopic...

I am so microscopic that you do not see ME when you throw away this can of fears and tears, this bomb of humanity, on the wayside of some desolate road.

The wind howls its ethereal song
and
Silence.

(egg whites)



Simstim

...Began
with time
child of
perfection
possessing beauty
creating life
back when
days before
for today
with him
came technology
intentions of
such good
a crime
unseen is
the pain
she suffers
now open
your eyes
greet her
we must
fail not
or fail
our mother...

Rob Taylor

I Long for Light

Staying still in the dark
With nothing in sight.
Nothing here to see,
It doesn't seem right.

Darkness closes in
With loneliness all round
Creeping about the dark
Without making a sound.

How I long for light!
And to see once again,
For everything to be right,
Like it was back then.

Darkness closes in,
This time for good.
Try not to fight its grasp,
But maybe I should.

Pass silently without a sound,
The last breath like the wind.
Emptiness meets darkness,
That's the way it should have been.

David Hyun

What the Hell was He Doing with a Knife

Laura Heian

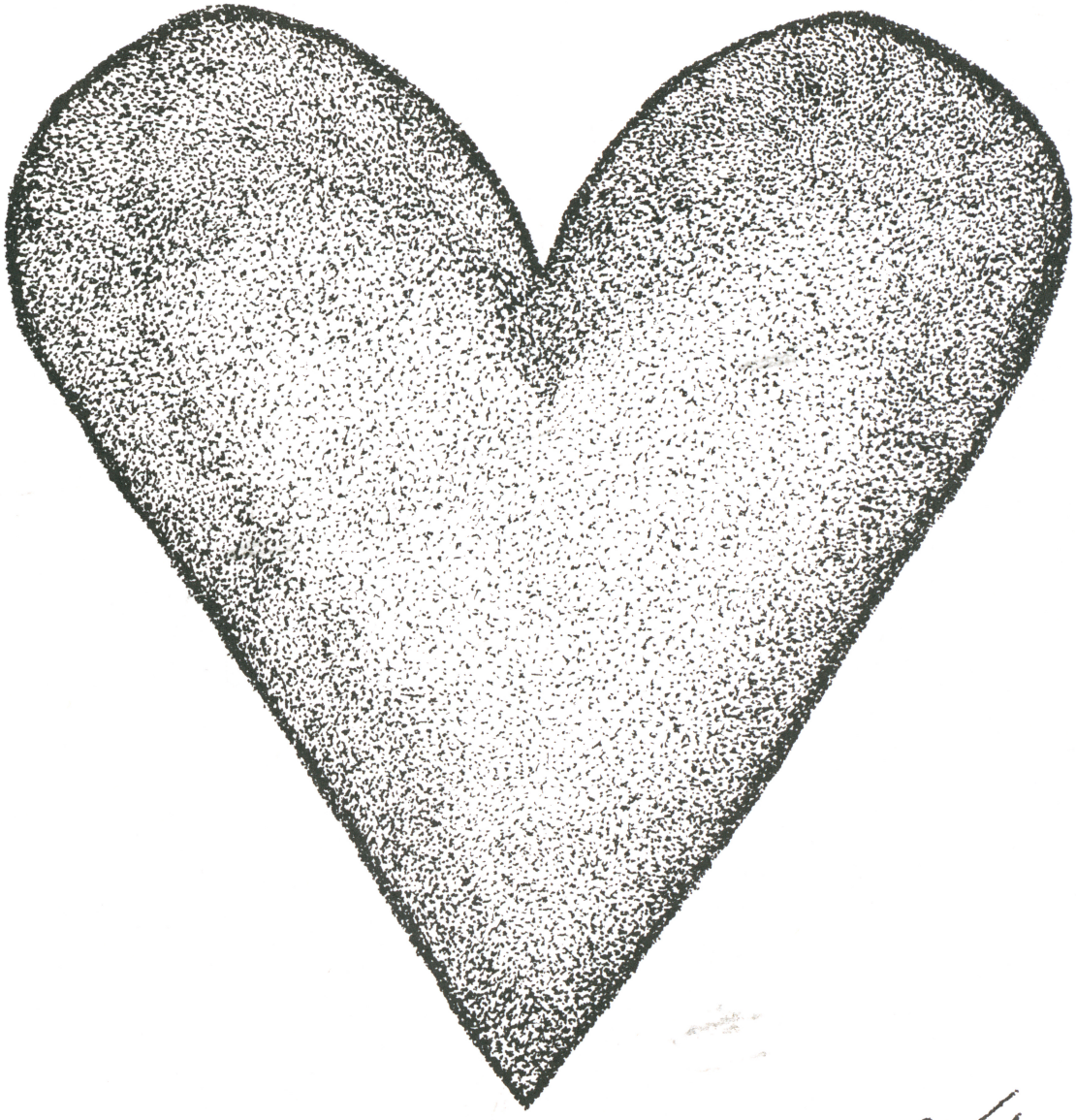
I'm sitting on the floor of my room by the heating vent. Looking out the window, at least trying, all I can see is the reflection of my room. It's the second day of the second month. My mommy just told me my sister almost died. 6:30

My sister is smart. She is a senior at Harvey Mudd, a private engineering school. She is loveable. Her boyfriend came to see her over winter break, all the way from Pennsylvania. She takes care of me. Someone tried to kill her. 6:35

My great grandmother died the only year I bought her a Christmas card. My grandfather died when I was eight. My step-brother's great grandfathers both died after my dad and his mom married. Amy's dad died. My brother died four months after he was born, three years before I was born. I can see the dead leaves on my balcony. A girl I went to ballet class with died in a car crash when she was eleven. But none of these people grew up with me, and no one meant to kill them. 6:43

My sister's friend tried to break down her door on Sunday, the twenty-fourth of January. My sister talked about this friend. He was nice, he was smart; my sister liked him. That same night he came back later with a knife. Another friend of my sister's was there and was able to hold the boy with the knife till help came. What the Hell was he doing with a knife? 6:49

It has been a week and a half since. My sister finally called and told my mom. My sister was shaken up, but is recovering, along with her friend that prevented her death. My mom seems calm, however, we do have airline tickets to go see my sister this weekend. I was shaken and have sought the solace of the green pen my sister gave me for Christmas to write my thoughts. The boy that was nice, the boy with the knife, the friend of many who knew him, is in a psychiatric hospital in Washington State. His father took him home and admitted him recently. He knows he is mentally ill and it scares him. I still want to know what the Hell he was doing with a knife. 6:56



Sue and I

Take me away to cafe lane
Where Sue and I
fell in love
He was beautiful, Sue was
'Damm it Dave, you're lying.
You know I can tell when you are.'

See, he called me Dave
I called him Sue
Not for any particular reason
the names just fit
Yep, we were in love...
but not in the way you think

We name it cafe lane
Marked with Maples and our favorite cafes
the weather was always overcast
but it welcomed us all the same

Sue was my best friend
And I loved him like chocolate
passionately
I loved the taste of his presence
I died for the flavor of his words
We loved to talk
together
and nowhere else, but cafe lane
would do

Mocha mindset
he'd sip and say all
fearlessly
Sue's lips were magical
on cafe land
he spoke with eloquence
and his mocha mindset.

Amy McCarrel

Northern Lights

Shifting and shining in an other worldly current
Great streamers of vibrant life.
This is a place of timeless thread;
Ancient norsemen gazed upon this symphony
and saw it just as I perceive it now.

Wonders such as these shape the minds of men.
I will be forever loyal to this shrine of mystery
Holding the memory for all of time
fresh in my mind's eye
and in my heart.

Will I ever dream the same dreams?
Will I ever see the night as I did before?
Understand that someone can change.
A new lease on the senses
All from a beautiful spectacle.

Do you see things as I see them?
Is your green my green?
Is your red as hot as mine?
blue as peaceful?
yellow as friendly?

A simple measure of reflecting light.
My dog can't see it
Yet what would my world be without it?
Flat; two dimensional.
Colors are my fascination.

Aaron Hegg

There is a hacker in me...reclusive, unfriendly, perpetually alone...looks like anyone else, until you meet me...sitting in the dark staring unemotionally at the bright screen...fingers whirling over the keyboard always in motion...from the hacker in me I gain intuition our rules, our laws, our morals.

There is a sterotype in me...just like everyone else; lost in the crowd of faces, all the same...do what he does we are all identical the white middle class of suburbia ...always striving to be accepted...in doing so we are lost...born into suburbia to be a twin to everyone.

There is a soldier in me...cold, calculating, supreme strategist of a deadly game...immune now to the pain of comrades' death...commanding the often inferior, to the final charge...only to be cut down...dying a hero to be remembered forever.

There's a criminal, a face in the crowd, and a cold killer in me and each one surfaces from time to time. I can't suppress any of them and I've grown to accept it.

Adam Jung

The Dark Wind

Nightly comes the dark wind,
It steals away the light
Fear that spirits send
Grow as does the night.
And men of darkest shadows
Ride down from the clouds
Unleased anger's earthly shrouds.
From Valhalla coming
Are soliders of the light,
Again and evergoing
Good and evil fight.
And once again the triumph,
Brief though it may be
Soliders ranks again disperse
As sunlight hits the sea.

Vera Mulcahy

The Dancer

The sunset had melted,
and night began to dominate the skies.
I walked out on Sea Cliff and stood,
shivering from the coldness of the gusty wind.
I gently placed my arms on the barrier
that lay in front of me.
It was smooth,
as though polished by many arms before mine.
It prevented me from performing with my
magnificant dancer.
I watched him dance for an hour or so,
the wind conducting his actions.
His movements sang the most
wonderful tunes.
Their lyrics spoke of peace and tranquility.
He danced intensely-swaying back and forth,
twirling around.
During the last half hour of my stay,
he started to doze off and the wind
begun to die down.
He lay serene, sometimes moving-
still singing their melody; softer and calmer now.
On occasion, the dancer would awake from his slumber,
only to crash down again.
Each time,
a white puff of what looked like clouds
or whipping cream would appear.
He embraced his aquatic with comfort
and gentle touches, rocking them to sleep
The glorious moon caressed his skin,
soothing him until the sun was reborn.
I left my dancer,
no longer cold but filled with warmth and pleasure,
already looking forward to his next performance.

Lauren Payne

if they had known
Why did you never
Tell them
what you wanted to say; you never
freed your soul. You never
Thanked them
for all they have given you; you never
told them what it meant.
To you.
Instead
You locked it up inside. Your words
drying on the brittle paper that was your tongue,
crumbling and
fading; drowning.
Dying.
You never thought; never knew
that some things they would never know,
Never learn. You dreamt
About a cloud, and
love. Never seeing they were blind,
Never hearing they were mute.
You danced,
And they, they watched from shadow
Of you silhouettes;
The dark rainfall of your dreams.
Did they wish?
Or did they merely smile fondly
And hope you were happy
While you wondered if they were?
Did they turn away, with feeling
best kept hidden
To sleep in the blackness of night
With evil on the inside?
If your soul had spoken,
if your spirit had been free
to wander,
Not confined to wonder
If they had known.

Emily Arnold

Saint Joan

I know something of the fear which o'ertakes men
Of the wisdom unfelt, passion revealed, glories embraced.
I do not fall victim.
See me alone, surrounded by hundreds who follow me.
I do not care if you accept this person I become.
I feel it, in my soul, the voices echoing and urging,
Blessed saints flying through the bells and wind
And I will live to hear them, burn and preserve them.
I feel a purity, wholly in my self,
And though I do not know, and will never understand.
I will accept.

Gretchen Lanka

I imagine you
You are near
but just out of sight.
One glimpse is all I got,
only a flash of blue and blonde.
I cannot see you
but I know you are there.
You are in my mind,
my mind's world.
Hair of dried grass blowing in the wind,
Strong legs shoving off the earth.
Eyes raised mirroring the color of the sky.
Adrenaline rushing through warm veins.
Weaving over and through
golden hills burning under the setting sun.
Enduring, escaping
from unanswered physics problems and deadlines for decisions,
passing through pain, through imperfection
into Glory.
Your destination does not matter, you are there.

If only I were around the next bend
waiting for you to collapse into my arms.
If only I were that sky
you gaze at and dream of touching.
But you run on
leaving everything in your dust.

Sonja Downing

Nothing can bind her,
nothing will catch her.
Gaiety lurks deep within,
dolphins seem to play in the ocean of blue,
captured beneath her eyelids.

Painful jokes, glorious laughter.
One can easily miss the depth,
hidden among the scheme and the dreams.
Heather's real emotions are locked away.

Boyfriends come and go.
No matter.
She is complete, needing nothing
except the freedom to imagine.

If she sees gray reality,
it is a mere inconvenience.
Flying past the confines of conformity,
she dives into a puddle, arms flailing,
whirling.

She pays no mind and goes on
never looking back at where she came from.
Seldom looking ahead.

Susie Meissner

Did he call? It's been six days. I could call him--but I called him the last two times--he should have called by now... He didn't call.

I'll admit it, I was feeling down. Love sucks, but I'm bitter because it never happens to me.

Everyone has ways of dealing with depression. Some people share their troubles with friends, some people look to Johnnie Walker or Jeam Beam for comfort, some people turn to Ben and Jerry for the anwer. My vice is equally reckless, I get into my car.

On a good day, a trip downtown with me at the wheel is exhilarating, to say the least. When I'm upset, nobody, pedestrians included, is safe. I revved the engine and began releasing aggressions on innocent motorists.

Tires smoking and gas nearing empty, I found myself, of all places, on Telegraph Avenue. Not the Berkeley end of Telegraph, with vagrants and street vendors, where Acalanes students occasionally venture to grab of glimpse of poverty before driving their Volvos back to suburbia. I was on Telegraph nearing downtown Oakland. The road was wide, but the bustle of City Center or the campus area seemed only a memory. Ghosts, along with an occasional wino, crack dealer and prostitute lined these streets.

I needed to find a gas station. I pulled over and parked, but suddenly, speaking to a stranger in this foreign land (complete with a live and in person view of the drug, and apparently the characters as well, that I had only seen on New Jack City) was a frightening idea. I locked my door and stayed in the car.

There was nothing on the radio. I scanned the backseat, realizing I'd forgotten the CD I'd wanted to listne to. Where could I get gas--scanning the area, my scowl deepened as I reminded myself that gas stations in Hell are probably pretty scarce.

The glance distracted my attention from the absence of the CD I wanted. I began to look more closey at my environment.

The boy on the corner must have been only twelve or thirteen. He was very tall and skinny. He was black. Every few minutes, someone would come up the street. In a flash of motion, they handed him money and he handed back something in return. I looked away.

There was a prostitute on the other side of the street. Her clothes were drab and wrinkled. She wore a bright pink feather boa around her neck, the only color on the block, it screamed "look at me." Even from my distance, I could see her droopy eyes. I wondered how she became what she was. I wondered how long she had been working on that block. I wondered how much longer she would. Where do these people go? Motion sever yeads down caught my eye. It was only then that I saw the building.

Battered and scarred from years of drug and turf wars, the building's dingy exterior told of the horrors it's longevity had related, the ghoulish corpses it'd housed.

The bricks, like everything else on that block who's time had come and gone, were graying and dirty. The patch of lawn was brown, mostly crab grass. The attempt at greenery, rather than giving life to the dull structure, added to it's chilling bleakness.

It was a funeral parlor, a place for grief.

People did not come there, the guests of honor were empty bodies, for them it was just too late. The place was ramshackle, a cheap way for relatives to ease their guilt.

The building had seen it all. Old or young, corrupted or corruptor, it couldn't tell. It didn't care.

The shortest, most poignant of all Bible passages came to mind: "Jesus wept," and I felt a tear make it's way softly down my cheek.

A motley assortment of people streamed from inside the parlor, blinking even in the grey bleakness of the street. I'd hate to see what the inside was like. Outside on the cracked pavement, the gathering began to disperse. Greetings had been given, appearances, for appearances sake were made, and life or whatever semblance of it these people shambled through, would go on without whoever it was that died.

I didn't know who it was. I wasn't crying, specifically, for him or her. I cried for the little boy on the corner, selling drugs to by food for his family. Or maybe to support his own habit. I cried for the young prostitute with the old, dead eyes. I cried with the sadness that such things could be. I started my car towards home, realizing it wasn't such a bad thing to be me.

Vera Mulcahy

Innocence

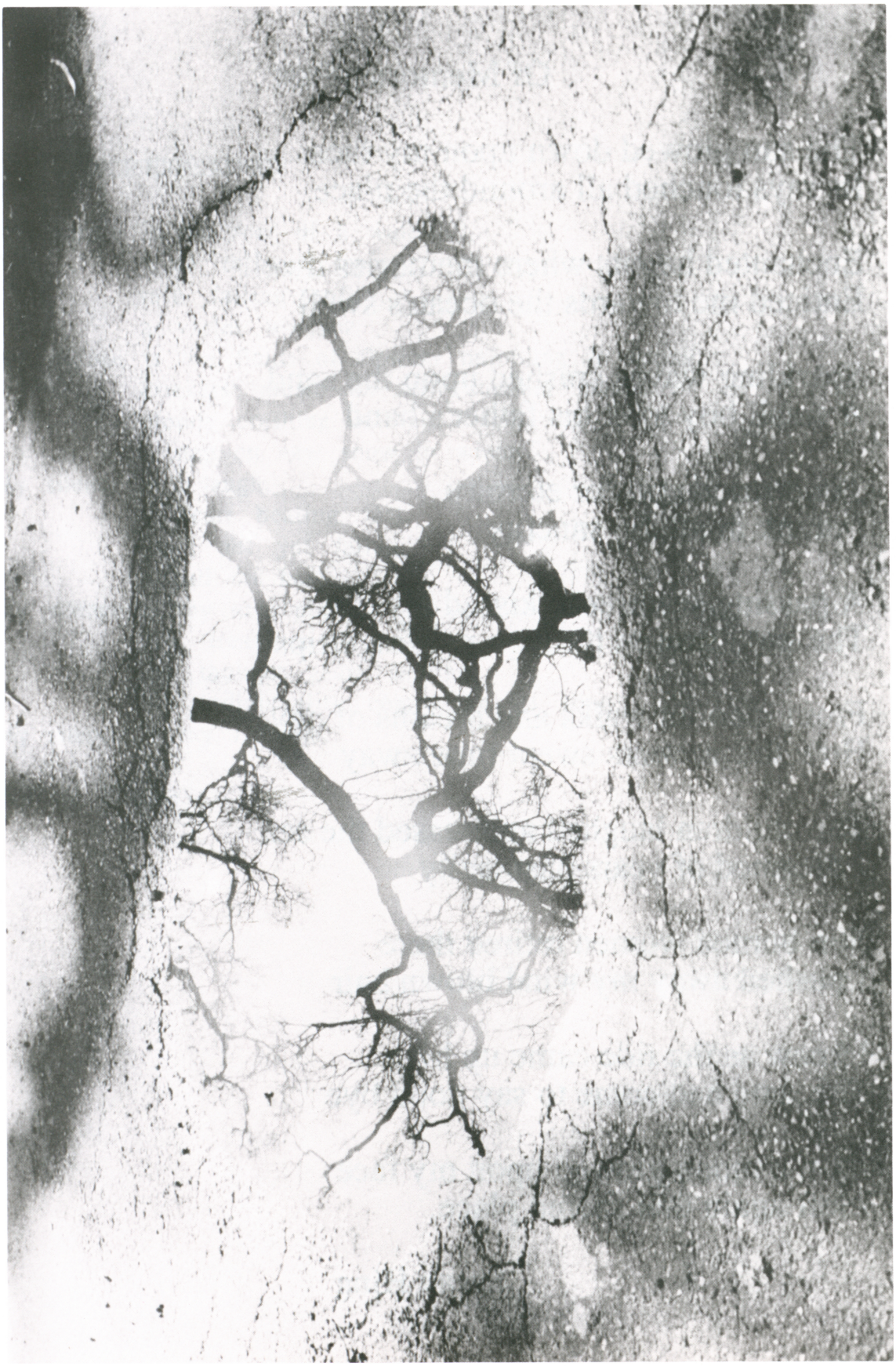
That year everything went mundane
The dew did not glisten in the early morning
The fairies did not race boats down the streams near her house
The unicorns lost their horns and ran through the weeds like the nags they really were
The wind was not a wild beast, threatening to steal her away into its dark dungeons
The castles with their purple mists sank below the mountains' heights
The dragon snarled its last snarl as she climbed its back
And then it, too, was nothing more
Just a twisted tree limb on a barren, windswept hill

That year the flowers opened to find they had no awed audience
Sitting quietly in the emerald grasses
She forgot them all, and walked on her own lonely path
The world beat at her and she tried to fight back
She looked wildly for the unicorns, but found only lies
Men who did not love her but took her
Work that did not lead to anything but used her
Finally she saw nothing but that narrow reality,
With its exhaust fumes and bottle caps and pale green chewed gum
Her heart fluttered deep beneath a studied shell of granite

That year the rain fell
It came slowly, a fine mist that quickened to a drenching downpour
Water swirled through her life, sweeping her away in a great whooshing
torrent that paid no heed to her cries
Eventually it dried away, the last few puddles evaporated and returned to the clouds
She lifted her head, her eyes blurred and lost, weary, aching
There was nothing left, no sneering faces or smiles that curved too sweetly
No coins clutched in her hands, fat with health or scrawny with need
She looked around her, and the land was bleak and gray
The people ran back and forth but did not stop to look

That year a flower bloomed

Christine Nickel



Of Memories Past

The sun glowed down upon my face
Its rays touched all around the place

Enchanted haunts where memories dwell
Enticed me towards the ocean's swell

Sparkling waves crashed upon the sand
A small boy took his father's hand

Time stood still for eternity
I drank in all the sanctity

A passing sea breeze kissed my lips
The sand flowed through my fingertips

From moonlit walks and dreams of day
How the currents swept time away

The children laughed and teased the sea
I dreamed of years past lazily

Sun burned women retired there
I pushed away my wind blown hair

I knew as the tide came up high
The time had come to say good bye

As the moon glowed upon my face
I left again that sacred place.

Sarah Hing

MY SILENCE EXPLAINED

My silence is the roar of a waterfall,
wind through trees,
rain falling softly,
a violet whisper.
My silence is the fields of flowers unfolding in spring,
crickets' music on still summer nights,
clouds crashing in fall,
a step on new snow in winter.
My silence is a laugh,
a heart beating fast,
tears not yet fallen,
a call for help.
My silence is my safe place,
my treasure,
my thought gears turning,
my individuality composing its song.
My silence is my freedom.

Willow Darsie

The heavy, dank air envelops me as I breathe in the ancient Italian stone and musty oak pews in need of sunlight. Somewhere in the back, a baby cries, and as the girl next to me tugs nervously at my taffeta skirt, our director hums our pitches. We start in unison, our one voice hitting the walls and bouncing against the frescos and statues. "The Lord is my shepherd, I have all I need. She makes me lie down in green meadows..." As the harmony begins, I feel the notes echoing in my bones and I know that this is it; this is beautiful; this is right. Concentrating first on my director's graceful hands, then his mouth to guide me, I feel my voice blending with those voices around me. "She restores my soul, she rights my wrongs. She leads me in a path of good things, and fills my heart with song." I lose myself, and forget, for a moment, that I am in a cathedral in Italy, singing for a crowd of complete strangers who don't understand the words we say. Our words, I realize, do not matter to them as they listen to the song; music is universal. I look at the singers around me, and view them as part of me, as I know I am a part of them. Our love of music unites us, and I know that I will remember this moment as long as I live. As I look at this ground, their faces life and inspire me, and these same voices I have heard for a year sound mystical and flawless. I feel a small piece of perfection as the notes float back to our ears, and I grab my friend's hand to reassure myself that I am not the only one who is overwhelmed by the cathedral, the people, the song, and the pure, beautiful sound.

Gretchen Lanka

The Lord is my shepard, I shall create

As empty entity
derived by a group
of paranoid minds
with the soul intent
of creating an illusion
to battle their fears,
or their uncertainty,
which ever hurts
the helplessness more

starting a war
with their conception
they began to lose
all perception
that their illusion
was not real
He could not feel
their sorrow
that was buried
under a pile
of cold grey stone

Darren Massey

Midnight Distraction

From between the blades of grass, the sun slips slowly beneath the horizon:
Nighttime.
Where dreams come true in our hearts and minds.
The spirit flies willingly to the angels.
It is the darkness that feels no pain and sorrow
Enveloping your soul, a single rose;
Petals fall from broken dreams.
Weakness seen through closed eyes;
Eyes that taste the stars and smell the onyx light.
Chimerical memories linger between dusk and dawn.
Dew drops form on the cheeks of those slighted in the midnight illusion.
Comfort comes from the blackness that sleeps with you at night.
Tears fall for those engulfed in melancholy dreams.
Dry grains are counted by the strong.
Those lameting never cease, until from the lines between the blades of grass, the Golden sphere rises once more.

Erica Jones

The First Reaction

When the rain came, pouring down in gray sheets
The earth was cleansed of the oppresive heat
The earth produced a solitary rose
When I came, riding the elephant's back
You alone noticed the thing that I lack
The empty box hung limply at my side
The emptiness I had wanted to hide
The rain and sun knew what they had to do
I knew not but to keep my box from you

Greg Nicholson

The Phoenix

In the cryptic Willow tree
There the Immortal sits.
Silhouette of black
Eyes are piercing slits.
He crouches on the branches
Then he darkly sings.
With Outstretched Power arms
He spreads his fire wings.
Untamed, violent speed,
Unmatched agility.
The Phoenix races through your mind
And Distorts reality.
Blazing circles of fire seep through
Latent screams of fear.
A shimmering chemical field unchained
He whispers in you ear.
"My friend you are insane today,
I control you mind, you see."
Molecules quickly rearrange
Then come floating back to me.
The Phoenix hovers overhead
Until the madness ends.
The Immortal returns to his tree
As your new life begins.

Phil Ringler

The Door to Life

The door to life opens
When sunlight glows over the horizon.
Living creatures, awakened
By the fresh scent of the air,
Suck in the breeze.
The excitement of life begins.
Finches, with their loud chirping,
Fill the land with soothing music.
As light flows over above us,
Brightness forms a wavelike motion,
In which only He and the birds can see
With their wise, sharp eyes.
Petals of roses, one by one,
Unlock their scent into the world.
Leaves of trees whisper to each other
About their plans for the day.
Like a mother giving birth
To her newborn infant,
Mother Nature holds the key
For her children to enter daylight.

I, the figure of strength,
Glide swiftly in the blue sky
As I look down
Upon the heads of my sisters and brothers.
I, the leader of all birds, greet my prey
To have them look up at me
With the sense of death.

Everyday, I hear the sounds
Of whipping, winterfresh, waterfalls
Racing and thrashing each other
As they make their journey.
Everyday, I hear the cries
Of animals communicating.
Such strange sounds
That seem to echo on forever.

Now, I sense I must return
To where I dwell
For shadows are emerging from Heaven,
Filled with twinkling, tiny sparkles.
The breeze, once refreshing,
Now, old and sticky
Like a worn out book
That's been in hundreds of human hands.

The time has come
With one last look of nature
To stop our occupations and hibernate
'Til the next door opens.

Thuy Hong Nyugen

Ground Hog Day

A misty morn' in February,
the people came to see
The waking of the sacred swine
to learn of what will be.

His breath cut through the biting cold
and in their hearts they cheered
The scruffy bit of well worn whiskers
to ease the fate they feared.

Just then the sun broke through the clouds
they drew one final breath
The famed beast he blinked sleepily
the choice: rebirth or death?

He spied the earth from east to west
nowhere was his profile
The changing of the seasons
would continue all the while!

For ever upon this day
the clairvoyant rodent rises
Winter or Spring; only time will tell
what he prophecises.

Aaron Hegg

COME WALK WITH ME

Come walk with me through a forest of dreams,
Where Bracken Fern grow amongst the dense trees.
That it is older than time.
Once I was told, time doesn't pass there,
It just is.
The Blue Oak forests stretch for miles,
Till they give way to the younger Redwoods.
It is in this forest of noble wood,
That fairy dust rests heavy upon the living.
One feels the power and eneryg in the air,
So strong that you can't turn back.
The animals seem to beckon,
Deeper and deeper you travel into peace.
No longer walking through nature,
But becoming a part of it.
A path seems to open up before you,
Yet when you look back it is gone.
The trees look as they learn towards you as you travel by,
Or is it you that is learning toward them.
As you walk through a patch of dense oaks you hear a whisper,
The voice asks you to stay.
You start to answer but then you doubt yourself,
Only to hear it again.
This time you answer.
You response is met by the voices of all the trees,
And bushes around you,
Calling you to take a second sojourn and listen to their stories.
Overwhelmed, you sit down,
Maybe to listen to their stories,
Or to tell your own.
All that surrounds you look on with love.

The Black Berry bushes push forth their vines,
Offering you the sweetest of berries,
So juicy they drip with color.
They are bathed in gold dust,
Which rubs off on your fingers and lips.
You want to stay forever,
To learn all the forest has to teach.
But you know that you must leave.
Sure that you will return,
You try to remember the way.
You realize there is no way,
And don't mark a path,
Knowing you'll always find you way back.
Have you ever found these woods?
Are any as lucky as I?
Please let me take you there.

Mike Herrin

Nicki

Thick braids
And short pink skirts.
Scarred, shiny coal legs, with
Scuffed white heels.
Muscular calves on the road to
No where,
Fast.
Strutting the streets
And picking up guys on the highway,
Spending the night
With a nameless face,
Strictly cuddling.
A murdered brother, a cage full of
Rats, and a drug addict mother to comfort her
when times got tough.
"Yo mama!" she'd yell to get my attention.
"Yo baby!" I'd answer with a tiny grin.
Time to get serious, I'd tell her under the
Elm.
Time to think about what you're doing.
I worry about your safety.
Remember the first time we met? She'd change the
subject.
Spontaneous Biology hugs
On my first day of school.
Yeah. I'd laugh. I do.
Nicki...
Listen yo me.
"Yo mama!" She called sadly.
I love you, too.

Kristy Ward

TO DEFINE WITHIN LINES

Don't put me in your box
or make me think I'm wrong.
Don't push me behind you and make me hide;
I don't hide my true identity.
Don't tell me I'm by myself
when I'm standing in a crowd.
Don't put your arms around me and tell me I can change
because I can't.
Don't hate me;
it was you that made me realize what I am.
I took off my mask.
I've torn down my walls.
I've shown you what I am.
Now accept me
or turn your back on me.
It's not you.
It's not your fault.
I need you more than ever.
I only wish I could've told you then instead of hurt you now.
I've learned to accept what I am.
Now it's your turn.

Lynessa Oliver

Tell the one about the strawberries
Oh you know how I love
the red, seeded candy
tell the one about the little girl
you know the one I mean
the plump little indian girl
the one they called little papoose
Tell about her uncle's strawberry patch
that stretched green and red for miles
Ooh, it makes me want to dive right in
Tell how they left her there
the fat little darling
Tell how she ate and laughed, ate and
rolled, ate and giggled and ate and ate-
until all the newly picked berries were gone
Tell how they found her
gay and sticky
with those red, red lips
presenting her smile
Oh, tell it again-
but leave out the part about me
ruining my dress

Finally
by Margaret Conley

The wind was all but feeble
Yet, without a care
I kept running,
running away from my past.
The powerful current
pressing my clothes harshly against my body,
obstructing me from my forward path
forever pushing,
pushing me back.
Like charging into an invisible wall,
pedaling a stationary bike,
or attacking a windmill.
Strenuous efforts, but advancing nowhere.
Horizontal streams of tears
flowing from the outer corners of
my bloodshot eyes,
streaking dark trails of mascara
across my crumpled face.
I remember birds were chirping
as I tore through the murky wood
oblivious to life they sang,
oblivious to life they lived.
Yet, I was there
and truly knew I was.
The leaves beneath my feet
crunched with every step I took,
my weight compressing them
to tiny fragments.
But lifting my head up
I saw still more leaves.
More leaves to be crushed,
more leaves to be crossed
more leaves to be conquered.
Soul shattered, I sank slowly
to the comforting cool blanket
of earth below.
Clawing at the dirt,
feeling the grains underneath
my fingernails,
I scooped up my frustrations
and I lay them
on top of me.
Collapsing my heavy eyelids,
I rest in peace.
Finally.

The Duke of Hazard

The words "driving" and "nervousness" used to have a synonymous ring. The ringing became sharper as the days of Drivers Education dwindled. Thought of driving a car worried me. Would I hit someone? What if I did? What if the teacher **laughed**? What if my partner laughed? With all these questions in my mind, I promptly busied myself by doing nothing to sign up for Driver Training.

Finally, after deciding that death would be more favorable than the prodding and prying from my parents, I signed up. The instructor signed me up in a hurry. Hey, don't worry about it, I said, you can wait as long as you want. He signed me up for the next Saturday anyway.

Upon receiving this bit of alarming news, I could not find a way to sleep. I was plagued with nightmares of hitting someone, turning right when ordered left, and any other general mishaps that go along with driving a car with sweat-soaked palms. Then I started to get really paranoid. I couldn't pay attention in class. All my thoughts strayed to the gruesome visions of Red Asphalt.....

After five days of nothing but nightmares, mental recaps of Red Asphalt, and a high degree of inner turmoil, the dreaded day came. Nervous breakdown or not, I was going to drive. Surprisingly enough, I met the event with inner calm. If I was going to die, so be it.

The instructor arrived a few minutes late, dashing my hope of not driving at all. He took me to a parking lot and I drove forward and backwards for about an hour. After I had grasped the concept of braking, he took me out on the road for a slow drive. making a road hazard of myself, I reached a stop sign and turned right, right into the curb. you're doing great, he assured me. The alarm displayed on the other driver's face told me otherwise. Driving was not exactly a piece of cake, but the alarmed looks the drivers gave me made it all worthwhile. After the sessions was over, I can honestly say it wasn't all that bad. I had suffered from no physical injuries and I was still mentally healthy.

Now, almost a year later, not much has changed. I'm still a hazard on the road. I drive with one hand and I cut off eighteen wheelers. Red lights are still a puzzle to me. I've always wondered if they had anything to do with the other cars using the intersection when I try to cross it...

Yih-Chau Chang

I see you
as clear and distant as the first day I saw the
British Isles
shrouded by mists of ambiguity.
alone.
surrounded by water crashing harshly
against your rocky shores.
If the sea touched your heart,
you might as well give up
for she would be too powerful
and your gentle soil would be quickly eroded.

I imagine you there,
in my distant fairy-land,
watching the rain drip off of the eve of your flat
in London.
or in July,
laughing and smoking,
in the warm northern sun
waiting for the evening fun
to begin.

Katie Howard

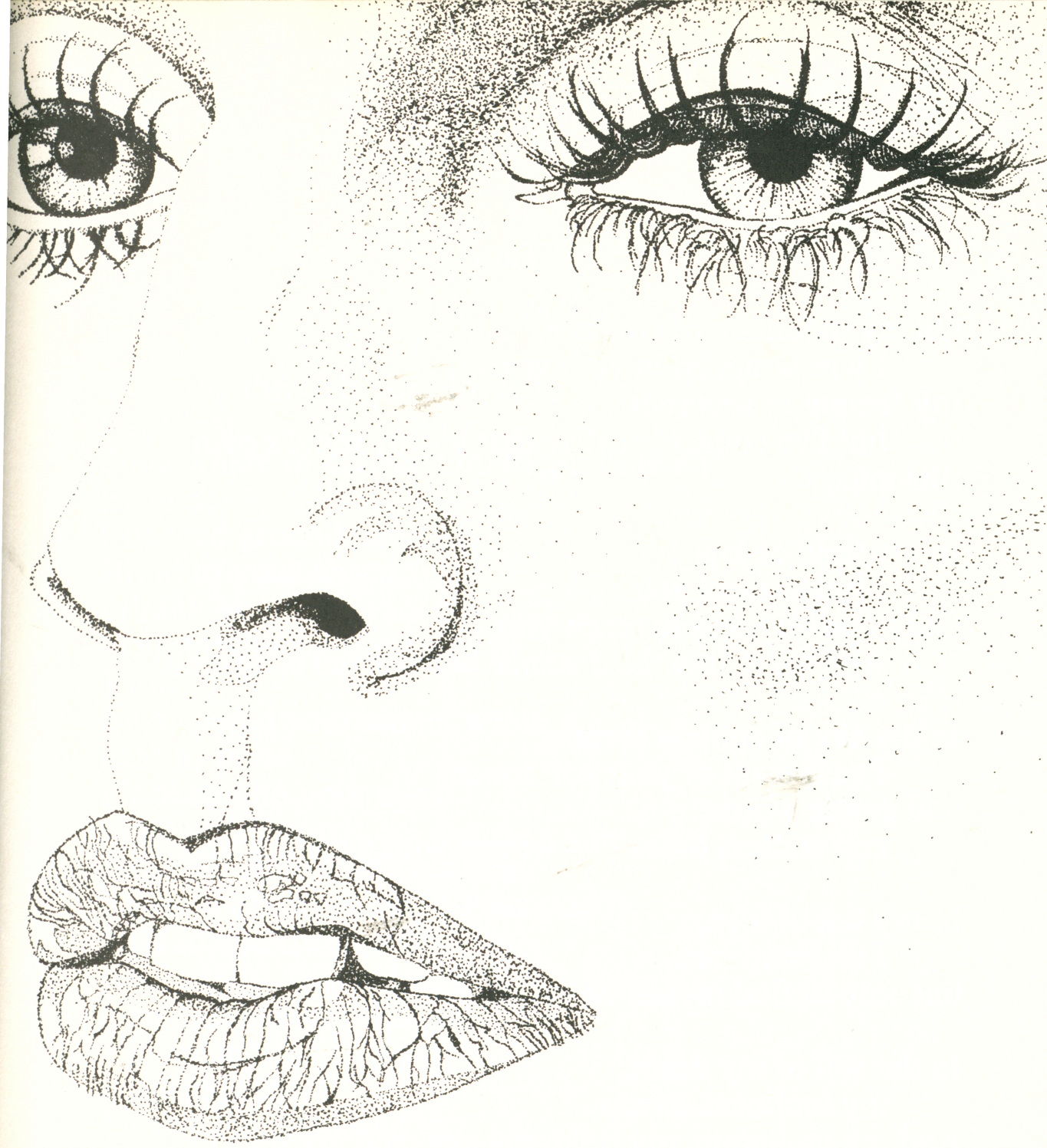
But It Never Ends

As he stands, not knowing
whether to leave or stay;
The rocks shatter and the plants
wither away like a stray
cat hiding from the city lights.
All the glamour, all the fear,
come and go like a child on
a merry go round; they come near,
then move afar, keep on
spinning until the ride is done.
He embraces the air of Armageddon,
the Good and Evil, thinks as one.
Unleash the sigh of sorrow and glory,
like a punctured balloon full of air,
letting it all out until there is not more;
and all is at rest, all is over and done with.
As he jumps, there is no breeze; only
an echo of silence that races
through his head.
Only in moments, all is at rest, all
is over and done with;
...But still, it never ends.

James S. Park

There was a man who lived by the Nile
Who kept his money in one large pile
he dove in the river
wanting a quarter
but too bad he drowned, for
a shiny round tile.

Chase Tsang



Nature

On my mountain of courage,
I was wrapped in your arms,
my feeling of securness,
but I've come to realize that it's my mind's own illusion.

In my field of joy,
I run to meet you,
Only I never seem to reach you,
And for a time the distance between us is infinite.

In my sky of endless dreams,
I've dreamt of your soft touch,
and gentle words,
and endless times I've woken with a broken heart.

In my sea of love,
I do swim free,
but only to find myself drowned within.

In the soil of my death,
my lonliness creeps.
And my mountain, my field, my sky, and my sea,
all bleed into one.
Nature I shall become,
only then will we be together.

Amanda Caesar

A Tapestry

Weaving through your love,
I got lost.
Somewhere in between midnight blue and
Brown.
I danced around, smiling,
Blind to your absence.
I drank in the fragrence-
the intoxicating fragrance of
You...
I whispered your name, wrote it
next to mine.
I looked into your eyes
somewhere near
sunshine yellow and noticed
cubes of ebony, next to your pupils.
I asked and listened to
your heavy, defined words.
You grabbed my shaking arms
and led me out of your
tangled web.
I guess I'm supposed to
thank you...
But, I can't.

Kristy Ward

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Editor's Page

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Christine and I would also like to thank God and other deities such as ourselves and all the fictional characters presented in the Acalite.

And, of course, thank you to all who submitted beautiful artwork and wonderful creative poems and stories. Also, thank you to all Acalite staffers, who took time out to read the submissions and also those who went to gather them. I hope you enjoyed the best Acalite ever!

Hälsningar,
Lynessa Oliver &
Christine Nickel